

[By Kirk Carapezza](#)

(Host) Congressman Peter Welch is introducing a bill that would provide tax relief for low-income Vermonters affected by Tropical Storm Irene.

Welch announced the legislation at Burlington International Airport Monday morning as he got ready to head back to Washington.

Welch said a sense of urgency may have faded since the storm hit eight weeks ago.

(Welch) "But the reality that you've lost your job or you've lost your home or you don't have a mobile home but you still have payments - that's brutal. And we all have to remember that, because Vermonters who've been hit still need financial help, they need volunteer help and they need emotional support."

(Host) Welch says the most crucial component of his bill is a child tax credit and earned income tax credit for low-income families.

(Welch) "If they lost their job so they then lose their income tax credit, we want to allow them to apply on the basis of last year's income. So that's really going to make a difference for those families."

(Host) If passed, Welch says his bill would also allow a \$500 tax exemption to those who provide housing to individuals displaced by Irene, and it would strip limitations on personal casualty losses caused by the disaster.

Despite partisan bickering over offsetting the cost of disaster relief in Congress, Welch says he's confident the measure will pass, in part, because similar legislation was provided to victims

of Hurricane Katrina.

Welch says Congress has always stepped up in response to disasters, and Irene should be no exception.